

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

JAVIER FELIX, individually, and on
behalf of other members of the general
public similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

STAPLES CONTRACT &
COMMERCIAL LLC, a Delaware
limited liability company; and DOES 1
through 10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. 5:24-cv-01968-KK-SPx

[Assigned to the Hon. Kenly K. Kato]

PROTECTIVE ORDER

Action Filed: July 29, 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS

Discovery in this action is likely to involve production of confidential, proprietary, or private information for which special protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecuting this litigation may be warranted. Accordingly, the parties hereby stipulate to and petition the Court to enter the following Stipulated Protective Order. The parties acknowledge that this Order does not confer blanket protections on all disclosures or responses to discovery and that the protection it affords from public disclosure and use extends only to the limited information or items that are entitled to confidential treatment under the applicable legal principles. The parties further acknowledge, as set forth in Section 12.4, below, that this Stipulated Protective Order does not entitle them to file confidential information under seal; Civil Local Rule 79-5 sets forth the procedures that must be followed and the standards that will be applied when a party seeks permission from the court to file material under seal.

1.2 GOOD CAUSE STATEMENT

This is a putative class and PAGA representative action that is likely to involve discovery regarding trade secrets, commercial, financial, proprietary, and/or personal information for which special protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecution or defense of this action is warranted. Such confidential and proprietary materials and information consists of, among other things, confidential business or financial information, information regarding confidential business practices, or other confidential commercial information, confidential information implicating privacy rights of third parties, information otherwise generally unavailable to the public, or which may be privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure under state or federal statutes, court rules, case decisions, or common law. For example (without limitation), Plaintiff is seeking the payroll records of putative class members, which are confidential records that

Defendant believes it has a duty to protect. Accordingly, to expedite the flow of information, to facilitate the prompt resolution of disputes over confidentiality of discovery materials, to adequately protect information the parties are entitled to keep confidential, to ensure that the parties are permitted reasonably necessary uses of such material in preparation for and in the conduct of trial, to address their handling at the end of the litigation, and to serve the ends of justice, a protective order for such information is justified in this matter. It is the intent of the parties that information will not be designated as confidential for tactical reasons and that nothing be so designated without a good faith belief that it has been maintained in a confidential, non-public manner, and there is good cause why it should not be part of the public record of this case.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Action: *Javier Felix v. Staples Contract & Commercial LLC*, Case No. 5:24-cv-01968-KK-SP.

2.2 Challenging Party: a Party or Non-Party that challenges the designation of information or items under this Order.

2.3 “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items: information (regardless of how it is generated, stored or maintained) or tangible things that qualify for protection under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c), and as specified above in the Good Cause Statement.

2.4 Counsel: Outside Counsel of Record and House Counsel (as well as the respective support staff of both).

2.5 Designating Party: a Party or Non-Party that designates information or items that it produces in disclosures or in responses to discovery as “CONFIDENTIAL.”

2.6 Disclosure or Discovery Material: all items or information, regardless of the medium or manner in which it is generated, stored, or maintained (including,

1 among other things, testimony, transcripts, and tangible things), that are produced
2 or generated in disclosures or responses to discovery in this matter.

3 2.7 Expert: a person with specialized knowledge or experience in a matter
4 pertinent to the litigation who has been retained by a Party or its counsel to serve as
5 an expert witness or as a consultant in this Action.

6 2.8 House Counsel: attorneys who are employees of a party to this Action.
7 House Counsel does not include Outside Counsel of Record or any other outside
8 counsel. House Counsel includes support staff.

9 2.9 Non-Party: any natural person, partnership, corporation, association, or
10 other legal entity not named as a Party to this action.

11 2.10 Outside Counsel of Record: attorneys who are not employees of a party
12 to this Action but are retained to represent or advise a party to this Action and have
13 appeared in this Action on behalf of that party or are affiliated with a law firm
14 which has appeared on behalf of that party, and includes support staff.

15 2.11 Party: any party to this Action, including all of its officers, directors,
16 employees, consultants, retained experts, and Outside Counsel of Record (and all of
17 their respective support staffs).

18 2.12 Producing Party: a Party or Non-Party that produces Disclosure or
19 Discovery Material in this Action.

20 2.13 Professional Vendors: persons or entities that provide litigation support
21 services (e.g., photocopying, videotaping, translating, preparing exhibits or
22 demonstrations, and organizing, storing, or retrieving data in any form or medium)
23 and their employees and subcontractors.

24 2.14 Protected Material: any Disclosure or Discovery Material that is
25 designated as "CONFIDENTIAL."

26 2.15 Receiving Party: a Party that receives Disclosure or Discovery Material
27 from a Producing Party.
28

1 3. SCOPE

2 The protections conferred by this Stipulation and Order cover not only
3 Protected Material (as defined above), but also (1) any information copied or
4 extracted from Protected Material; (2) all copies, excerpts, summaries, or
5 compilations of Protected Material; and (3) any testimony, conversations, or
6 presentations by Parties or their Counsel that might reveal Protected Material. Any
7 use of Protected Material at trial will be governed by the orders of the trial judge.
8 This Order does not govern the use of Protected Material at trial.

9 4. DURATION

10 Even after final disposition of this litigation, the confidentiality obligations
11 imposed by this Order will remain in effect until a Designating Party agrees
12 otherwise in writing or a court order otherwise directs. Final disposition will be
13 deemed to be the later of (1) dismissal of all claims and defenses in this Action,
14 with or without prejudice; and (2) final judgment herein after the completion and
15 exhaustion of all appeals, rehearings, remands, trials, or reviews of this Action,
16 including the time limits for filing any motions or applications for extension of time
17 pursuant to applicable law.

18 5. DESIGNATING PROTECTED MATERIAL

19 5.1 Exercise of Restraint and Care in Designating Material for Protection.

20 Each Party or Non-Party that designates information or items for protection under
21 this Order must take care to limit any such designation to specific material that
22 qualifies under the appropriate standards. The Designating Party must designate for
23 protection only those parts of material, documents, items, or oral or written
24 communications that qualify so that other portions of the material, documents,
25 items, or communications for which protection is not warranted are not swept
26 unjustifiably within the ambit of this Order.

27 Mass, indiscriminate, or routinized designations are prohibited. Designations
28 that are shown to be clearly unjustified or that have been made for an improper

1 purpose (e.g., to unnecessarily encumber the case development process or to impose
2 unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) may expose the Designating
3 Party to sanctions.

4 If it comes to a Designating Party's attention that information or items that it
5 designated for protection do not qualify for protection, that Designating Party must
6 promptly notify all other Parties that it is withdrawing the inapplicable designation.

7 5.2 Manner and Timing of Designations. Except as otherwise provided in
8 this Order (see, e.g., second paragraph of section 5.2(a) below), or as otherwise
9 stipulated or ordered, Disclosure or Discovery Material that qualifies for protection
10 under this Order must be clearly so designated before the material is disclosed or
11 produced.

12 Designation in conformity with this Order requires:

13 (a) for information in documentary form (e.g., paper or electronic
14 documents, but excluding transcripts of depositions or other pretrial or trial
15 proceedings), that the Producing Party affix at a minimum, the legend
16 "CONFIDENTIAL" (hereinafter "CONFIDENTIAL legend"), to each page that
17 contains protected material. If only a portion or portions of the material on a page
18 qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected
19 portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the margins).

20 A Party or Non-Party that makes original documents available for
21 inspection need not designate them for protection until after the inspecting Party has
22 indicated which documents it would like copied and produced. During the
23 inspection and before the designation, all of the material made available for
24 inspection will be deemed "CONFIDENTIAL." After the inspecting Party has
25 identified the documents it wants copied and produced, the Producing Party must
26 determine which documents, or portions thereof, qualify for protection under this
27 Order. Then, before producing the specified documents, the Producing Party must
28 affix the "CONFIDENTIAL legend" to each page that contains Protected Material.

1 If only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the
2 Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making
3 appropriate markings in the margins).

4 (b) for testimony given in depositions that the Designating Party identify
5 the Disclosure or Discovery Material on the record, before the close of the
6 deposition all protected testimony.

7 (c) for information produced in some form other than documentary and for
8 any other tangible items, that the Producing Party affix in a prominent place on the
9 exterior of the container or containers in which the information is stored the legend
10 “CONFIDENTIAL.” If only a portion or portions of the information warrants
11 protection, the Producing Party, to the extent practicable, will identify the protected
12 portion(s).

13 5.3 Inadvertent Failures to Designate. If timely corrected, an inadvertent
14 failure to designate qualified information or items does not, standing alone, waive
15 the Designating Party’s right to secure protection under this Order for such material.
16 Upon timely correction of a designation, the Receiving Party must make reasonable
17 efforts to assure that the material is treated in accordance with the provisions of this
18 Order.

19 6. CHALLENGING CONFIDENTIALITY DESIGNATIONS

20 6.1 Timing of Challenges. Any Party or Non-Party may challenge a
21 designation of confidentiality at any time that is consistent with the Court’s
22 Scheduling Order.

23 6.2 Meet and Confer. The Challenging Party will initiate the dispute
24 resolution process under Local Rule 37-1 et seq. If the Parties cannot resolve a
25 challenge without court intervention, the Designating Party shall file and serve a
26 motion to retain confidentiality.

27 6.3 The burden of persuasion in any such challenge proceeding will be on
28 the Designating Party. Frivolous challenges, and those made for an improper

1 purpose (e.g., to harass or impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other
2 parties) may expose the Challenging Party to sanctions. Unless the Designating
3 Party has waived or withdrawn the confidentiality designation, all parties will
4 continue to afford the material in question the level of protection to which it is
5 entitled under the Producing Party's designation until the Court rules on the
6 challenge.

7 7. ACCESS TO AND USE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

8 7.1 Basic Principles. A Receiving Party may use Protected Material that is
9 disclosed or produced by another Party or by a Non-Party in connection with this
10 Action only for prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this Action. Such
11 Protected Material may be disclosed only to the categories of persons and under the
12 conditions described in this Order. When the Action has been terminated, a
13 Receiving Party must comply with the provisions of section 13 below (FINAL
14 DISPOSITION).

15 Protected Material must be stored and maintained by a Receiving Party at a
16 location and in a secure manner that ensures that access is limited to the persons
17 authorized under this Order.

18 7.2 Disclosure of "CONFIDENTIAL" Information or Items. Unless
19 otherwise ordered by the court or permitted in writing by the Designating Party, a
20 Receiving Party may disclose any information or item designated
21 "CONFIDENTIAL" only to:

22 (a) the Receiving Party's Outside Counsel of Record in this Action, as
23 well as employees of said Outside Counsel of Record to whom it is reasonably
24 necessary to disclose the information for this Action;

25 (b) the officers, directors, and employees (including House Counsel) of the
26 Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action;

(c) Experts (as defined in this Order) of the Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);

(d) the Court and its personnel;

(e) court reporters and their staff;

(f) professional jury or trial consultants, mock jurors, and Professional Vendors to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);

(g) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a custodian or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information;

(h) during their depositions, witnesses, and attorneys for witnesses, in the Action to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary provided: (1) the deposing party requests that the witness sign the form attached as Exhibit A hereto; and (2) they will not be permitted to keep any confidential information unless they sign the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A), unless otherwise agreed by the Designating Party or ordered by the court. Pages of transcribed deposition testimony or exhibits to depositions that reveal Protected Material may be separately bound by the court reporter and may not be disclosed to anyone except as permitted under this Stipulated Protective Order; and

(i) any mediator or settlement officer, and their supporting personnel, mutually agreed upon by any of the parties engaged in settlement discussions.

8. PROTECTED MATERIAL SUBPOENAED OR ORDERED PRODUCED IN OTHER LITIGATION

If a Party is served with a subpoena or a court order issued in other litigation that compels disclosure of any information or items designated in this Action as “CONFIDENTIAL,” that Party must:

(a) promptly notify in writing the Designating Party. Such notification will include a copy of the subpoena or court order;

1 (b) promptly notify in writing the party who caused the subpoena or order
2 to issue in the other litigation that some or all of the material covered by the
3 subpoena or order is subject to this Protective Order. Such notification will include
4 a copy of this Stipulated Protective Order; and

5 (c) cooperate with respect to all reasonable procedures sought to be
6 pursued by the Designating Party whose Protected Material may be affected.

7 If the Designating Party timely seeks a protective order, the Party served with
8 the subpoena or court order will not produce any information designated in this
9 action as “CONFIDENTIAL” before a determination by the court from which the
10 subpoena or order issued, unless the Party has obtained the Designating Party’s
11 permission. The Designating Party will bear the burden and expense of seeking
12 protection in that court of its confidential material and nothing in these provisions
13 should be construed as authorizing or encouraging a Receiving Party in this Action
14 to disobey a lawful directive from another court.

15 9. A NON-PARTY’S PROTECTED MATERIAL SOUGHT TO BE
16 PRODUCED IN THIS LITIGATION

17 (a) The terms of this Order are applicable to information produced by a
18 Non-Party in this Action and designated as “CONFIDENTIAL.” Such information
19 produced by Non-Parties in connection with this litigation is protected by the
20 remedies and relief provided by this Order. Nothing in these provisions should be
21 construed as prohibiting a Non-Party from seeking additional protections.

22 (b) In the event that a Party is required, by a valid discovery request, to
23 produce a Non-Party’s confidential information in its possession, custody, or
24 control, and the Party is subject to an agreement with the Non-Party not to produce
25 the Non-Party’s confidential information, then the Party will:

26 (1) promptly notify in writing the Requesting Party and the Non-
27 Party that some or all of the information requested is subject to a confidentiality
28 agreement with a Non-Party;

(2) promptly provide the Non-Party with a copy of the Stipulated Protective Order in this Action, the relevant discovery request(s), and a reasonably specific description of the information requested; and

(3) make the information requested available for inspection by the Non-Party, if requested.

(c) If the Non-Party fails to seek a protective order from this court within 14 days of receiving the notice and accompanying information, the Receiving Party may produce the Non-Party's confidential information responsive to the discovery request. If the Non-Party timely seeks a protective order, the Receiving Party will not produce any information in its possession, custody, or control that is subject to the confidentiality agreement with the Non-Party before a determination by the court. Absent a court order to the contrary, the Non-Party will bear the burden and expense of seeking protection in this court of its Protected Material.

10. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

If a Receiving Party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it has disclosed Protected Material to any person or in any circumstance not authorized under this Stipulated Protective Order, the Receiving Party must immediately (a) notify in writing the Designating Party of the unauthorized disclosures, (b) use its best efforts to retrieve all unauthorized copies of the Protected Material, (c) inform the person or persons to whom unauthorized disclosures were made of all the terms of this Order, and (d) request such person or persons to execute the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" that is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

11. INADVERTENT PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED OR OTHERWISE PROTECTED MATERIAL

When a Producing Party gives notice to Receiving Parties that certain inadvertently produced material is subject to a claim of privilege or other protection, the obligations of the Receiving Parties are those set forth in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(b)(5)(B). This provision is not intended to modify

1 whatever procedure may be established in an e-discovery order that provides for
2 production without prior privilege review. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence
3 502(d) and (e), insofar as the parties reach an agreement on the effect of disclosure
4 of a communication or information covered by the attorney-client privilege or work
5 product protection, the parties may incorporate their agreement in the stipulated
6 protective order submitted to the court.

7 12. MISCELLANEOUS

8 12.1 Intent to Be Bound Upon Signing. It is the parties' intent to be bound
9 by the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order pending its entry so as to allow for
10 immediate production of "CONFIDENTIAL" Information or Items under the terms
11 herein.

12 12.2 Right to Further Relief. Nothing in this Order abridges the right of any
13 person to seek its modification by the Court in the future.

14 12.3 Right to Assert Other Objections. By stipulating to the entry of this
15 Protective Order no Party waives any right it otherwise would have to object to
16 disclosing or producing any information or item on any ground not addressed in this
17 Stipulated Protective Order. Similarly, no Party waives any right to object on any
18 ground to use in evidence of any of the material covered by this Protective Order.

19 12.4 Filing Protected Material. A Party that seeks to file under seal any
20 Protected Material must comply with Civil Local Rule 79-5. Protected Material
21 may only be filed under seal pursuant to a court order authorizing the sealing of the
22 specific Protected Material at issue. If a Party's request to file Protected Material
23 under seal is denied by the court, then the Receiving Party may file the information
24 in the public record unless otherwise instructed by the court.

25 13. FINAL DISPOSITION

26 After the final disposition of this Action, as defined in paragraph 4, within 60
27 days of a written request by the Designating Party, each Receiving Party must
28 return all Protected Material to the Producing Party or destroy such material. As

1 used in this subdivision, “all Protected Material” includes all copies, abstracts,
2 compilations, summaries, and any other format reproducing or capturing any of the
3 Protected Material. Whether the Protected Material is returned or destroyed, the
4 Receiving Party must submit a written certification to the Producing Party (and, if
5 not the same person or entity, to the Designating Party) by the 60 day deadline that
6 (1) identifies (by category, where appropriate) all the Protected Material that was
7 returned or destroyed and (2) affirms that the Receiving Party has not retained any
8 copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries, or any other format reproducing or
9 capturing any of the Protected Material. Notwithstanding this provision, Counsel
10 are entitled to retain an archival copy of all pleadings, motion papers, trial,
11 deposition and hearing transcripts, legal memoranda, correspondence, deposition
12 and trial exhibits, expert reports, attorney work product, and consultant and expert
13 work product, even if such materials contain Protected Material. Any such archival
14 copies that contain or constitute Protected Material remain subject to this Protective
15 Order as set forth in Section 4 (DURATION).

16 14. Any willful violation of this Order may be punished by civil or criminal
17 contempt proceedings, financial or evidentiary sanctions, reference to disciplinary
18 authorities, or other appropriate action at the discretion of the Court.

19
20 **FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN BY THE PARTIES’ STIPULATION, IT**
21 **IS SO ORDERED.**

22
23 Dated: December 20, 2024



24 HONORABLE SHERI PYM
25 United States Magistrate Judge
26
27
28

EXHIBIT A

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT TO BE BOUND

I, _____ [full name], of _____
[full address], declare under penalty of perjury that I have read in its entirety and
understand the Stipulated Protective Order that was issued by the United States
District Court for the Central District of California on _____ [date] in the
case of *Javier Felix v. Staples Contract & Commercial LLC*, Case No. 5:24-cv-
01968-KK-SP. I agree to comply with and to be bound by all the terms of this
Stipulated Protective Order and I understand and acknowledge that failure to so
comply could expose me to sanctions and punishment in the nature of contempt. I
solemnly promise that I will not disclose in any manner any information or item that
is subject to this Stipulated Protective Order to any person or entity except in strict
compliance with the provisions of this Order.

I further agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the United States District Court for
the Central District of California for the purpose of enforcing the terms of this
Stipulated Protective Order, even if such enforcement proceedings occur after
termination of this action. I hereby appoint _____ [full
name] of _____ [full address and
telephone number] as my California agent for service of process in connection with
this action or any proceedings related to enforcement of this Stipulated Protective
Order.

Date: _____

City and State where signed: _____

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____